

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

February 22, 1954

### **An Old Stockton Paper**

Through the interest and generosity of Charles Sutliff, a resident of the new city of Del Rey Oaks and a businessman of Monterey, we have been allowed to read and use in this column some of the historical material from a copy of the Stockton Weekly Independent, published in that city Saturday, April 22, 1865.

The issue, bordered in black column rules, announced the assassination and death of President Lincoln on Friday evening, April 14, as he watched, with his wife, a performance of "Our American Cousin" in Ford's Theater in Washington.

The almost 90-year-old paper was once the property of Mr. Sutliff's mother, the late Mrs. Ina May Sutliff of Pacific Grove, and found among her possessions after her death. It had probably been a keepsake of her father, the late Judge Abram Fitzsimmons, who died in 1944 at the advanced age of 98 years. The judge, who had been the Justice of the Peace in Pacific Grove for 25 years at the time of his death, came from Stockton to the Grove about 1898.

After an excellent news coverage of the assassination – even though late because of the difficulties in news transmission between the East and West coasts in 1865 – there are other interesting items in the Weekly Independent.

Under an item headed "Rain on the Coast" we read: "The total amount of rain that has fallen this season, up to this time, at Monterey is 12 inches and 21 one-hundredths. This is considerable more than fell last year, but still it is far from being sufficient for the agricultural interests."

Another item of international interest appeared in small type: "Water communication has been opened between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. The fact has been communicated by letter from M. de Lesseps to every Chamber of Commerce in Europe."

The Copperopolis Courier's birth is announced in a small item in the Independent: "In the great press of the recent melancholy news from the East, we forgot to notice that Messrs. Hatch and Burchfield have established a new weekly journal – the Courier – at Copperopolis, Calaveras County. It is neat in

appearance, devoted to local interests, conducted with fair ability, and ought to be sustained." Copperopolis is on Highway 4. It was there that copper mining began a few years after the discovery of gold. Most of the old buildings there were built of brick and some of local fieldstone.

The Independent also chronicled:

"The Rebels in California Knew It – A few days ago, a little son of the Rev. George B. Taylor of this city (Stockton) came running to his father, exclaiming "Papa, they are going to assassinate President Lincoln!" Mr. Taylor, paying little heed to the remark, endeavored to dismiss the matter from the mind of the child by telling him he thought it only some fancy that had entered his head. The child, however, insisted that he had heard some men speaking together of it, and one said, "Never mind, Lincoln will soon be assassinated." Can a doubt exist in the mind of any Union man that this bloody deed was known by the leading rebels in this city?"

An item in the Independent from Woodbridge reads: "As will be seen by the following communication, the most intense grief was felt by the citizens of Woodbridge, when the news of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln reached them."

And this letter:

"Editors of Independent: Grief, deep and overwhelming pervades our whole community. The sad news of our unparalleled bereavement fell upon us with paralyzing effect. We are unable at present to depict in words even a faint idea of the scenes we have this day witnessed. Badges of mourning are almost universally put on, and nearly every house is draped, at the loss of the Abraham of their own household.

Yours Sorrowfully,

"J. M. B. Woodbridge."